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February 18, 2009

Housing Policy Division
California Department of Housing and Community Development
1800 3rd Street
P.O. Box 952053
Sacramento, CA 94252-2053

HOUSING POLICY
DEVELOPMENT, HCD
FEB 24 2009

RE: General Plan Annual Report

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

Enclosed herewith, please find a copy of the City of Norwalk's General Plan Annual Report as required by Government Code Section 65400(b).

Should you have any questions, please contact me at (562) 929-5775.

Sincerely,

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT
Planning Division



Bing H. Hyun,
Planning Manager

Attachment

CITY OF NORWALK
2008 GENERAL PLAN ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT

**COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT
PLANNING DIVISION**

April 1, 2009

INTRODUCTION

On February 29, 1996, the Norwalk City Council adopted the City's current General Plan for implementation. The General Plan contains ten elements: Circulation, Community Design, Conservation, Educational and Cultural Resources, Housing, Land Use, Noise, Open Space, Safety and Utility Infrastructure. Of these elements, Community Design, Educational and Cultural Resources and Utility Infrastructure are the three new elements that were added to the General Plan as part of the 1996 comprehensive General Plan update.

As required by Government Code Section 65400 (b), every city must submit an annual progress report to their legislative body, the Governor's Office of Planning and Research (OPR), and the Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) on the implementation status of their General Plan. The annual report must also include discussion on the City's progress in providing its required share of affordable housing pursuant to Government Code Section 65584 and its efforts to remove governmental constraints for the maintenance, improvement and development of affordable housing per Section 65583.c (3) of the California Government Code.

This General Plan Annual Progress Report covers the period from January 1, 2008 to December 31, 2008.

STATUS OF GENERAL PLAN AND IMPLEMENTATION PROGRESS

General Plan Elements

Land Use Element – The City of Norwalk is considered a developed community comprised mostly of single-family residential neighborhoods, with its predominant commercial and industrial land uses situated along several major roadways. As a developed community, any future development in the city would occur as infill or redevelopment.

In February 1996, an updated Land Use Element was adopted as part of the City's comprehensive General Plan update. Since adoption of the 1996 General Plan, the City has processed a variety of new land use developments.

In 2006, the City initiated a moratorium prohibiting medical marijuana facilities in all zoning districts during the pendency of the City's review and adoption of permanent zoning regulations for such uses. Pursuant to state law, the City Council granted extensions to maintain the moratorium until August 14, 2008. Before the moratorium expired, the city passed an ordinance during 2008 that prohibited medical marijuana facilities in all zoning districts per Norwalk Municipal Code Section (NMC) 17.04.280.

Since the previous 2007 General Plan Progress Report, no General Plan Amendments were submitted for City Council approval.

Circulation – The Circulation Element of the 1996 General Plan defines the transportation needs of the City and presents a comprehensive transportation plan to accommodate those needs. The element also focuses on identifying and evaluating local circulation needs, while balancing those needs with regional demands and mandates.

The City of Norwalk currently participates in local and regional transportation planning and decision-making by implementing and conforming with the guidelines of the Los Angeles County Congestion Management Plan and the Los Angeles County Master Plan of Arterial Highways.

Through the Capital Improvement Program (CIP), the City continues to make a variety of improvements to its existing network of public streets (e.g., street resurfacing, sidewalk repair, American Disabilities Act (A.D.A.) compliance, etc.). In the 2008 calendar year, several residential areas throughout the City were repaved and had curb and gutter repairs, which were administered through the Local Street Overlay and the Curb and Gutter Repair Programs.

Some of the residential areas that were targeted by these programs include:

- South of Leffingwell Road, north of Rosecrans Avenue, east of Studebaker Road to Fallon Avenue; and
- South of Cheshire Street, north of 160th Street & Alondra Boulevard, east of Horst Avenue & Foster Road till Blackburn Avenue.

Additional street improvements that were completed in the calendar year of 2008 included one (1) new traffic signal and one (1) traffic signal upgrade. A new traffic signal was placed at the intersection of Rosecrans Avenue and Greenstone Avenue. A traffic signal was upgraded at the intersection of Foster Road and Bloomfield Avenue.

Other street improvements (e.g., street dedications, street widening, sidewalk construction, deceleration lanes, etc.) are funded and built by developers as part of their conditions of approval for developing their property. In addition, developers are responsible for paying their "fair share" of the cost to mitigate anticipated traffic impacts associated with new development in the City.

In addition to conducting street and circulation improvements, the City also provides a local transit operator for the community, which provides fixed-route and paratransit service since 1974. Norwalk Transit System (NTS) utilizes twenty-two (22) heavy-duty vehicles and four (4) Dial-A-Ride vans; continues to provide connector shuttle bus service between the Norwalk/Santa Fe Springs Transportation Center and the Metro Green Line Studebaker Station in Norwalk. Presently, Metrolink (commuter rail service between Orange County and Los Angeles) provides weekday train service to the Norwalk/Santa Fe Springs Transportation Center. This rail feeder service implemented by Norwalk Transit provides direct interconnectivity between rail stations (Metrolink-commuter rail and Metro Green Line-light rail).

Housing – In a continuing effort to provide housing assistance within the community, the City of Norwalk has the Norwalk Housing Authority and a CDBG Program Section. The Norwalk Housing Authority (NHA), which is a separate legal entity established in 1976, assists lower income families to secure decent, safe, and sanitary housing at affordable prices. The Housing Authority administers the ongoing Section 8 Certificate and Housing Voucher Programs. The federally funded Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program has the responsibility of administering a wide range of programs whose objective is to provide housing in a sound environment, principally for low and moderate-income households. The focus of CDBG activities are to provide financial assistance in the form of low cost home improvement programs, provide essential public services, stimulate the revitalization of older declining neighborhoods and monitor the modernization of essential infrastructure in neighborhoods with a high concentration of low/moderate income residents.

During the 2008 calendar year, Norwalk's Draft Housing Element was completed and reviewed by the Planning Commission and City Council. The draft was then forwarded to the State Housing and Community Development Department (HCD) for review. HCD then provided comments that need to be addressed in the City's Housing Element. The city is currently working on revisions to the draft, which will be presented to the Planning Commission for review and subsequently to the City Council before is it re-submitted to HCD.

Share of Regional Housing Need - The City's Housing Element identifies Norwalk's housing goals and objectives. As part of the current housing element, the City's share of affordable housing units (based on household income and size) has been incorporated into the City's Housing Element. A Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA) conducted by the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) determines the number and type of housing units. Table No. 1 (below) identifies the specific number and type of affordable housing units to be constructed within the City of Norwalk between 2006-2014. The identification of affordability type is categorized as Extremely Low (less than 30 percent of Los Angeles County's median income), Very Low (30-50 percent of L.A. County's median income), Low (50-80 percent of L.A. County's median income), Moderate (80-120 percent of L.A. County's median income), and Above Moderate (greater than 120 percent of L.A. County's median income). It should be noted that the "Above Moderate" income range is based on estimated original home sale prices and/or construction costs, with the assumption of a four-person household size. Actual affordability however, is based on many factors including, but not limited to, financing terms, required down payment, permitted debt ratio and household size (number of persons in family).

TABLE 1
CITY OF NORWALK
REGIONAL HOUSING NEEDS
01-01-06 to 06-30-14

<u>Income Category</u>	<u>Required Housing Units</u>	<u>Percent of Total</u>
Extremely Low	31	10.4%
Very Low	44	14.8%
Low	46	15.5%
Moderate	50	16.8%
Above Moderate	126	42.5%
TOTAL	297	100.0%

Housing Objectives and Programs - The following summarizes the progress that the City has made toward achieving Housing Element objectives and development of specific programs affecting housing:

With respect to Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) for the 2008 calendar year, CDBG funds have rehabilitated 86 homes as of December 31, 2008 to benefit low and moderate-income households in order to prevent or eliminate slums or blight within the community. In addition, CDBG funds have been previously allocated to support housing services to several non-profit organizations that provide shelter for abused, homeless or disadvantaged women and children.

The Home Investment Partnership (HOME), administered by the Community Development CDBG Division, also provides a variety of resources to assist elderly, low-income residents, in addition to the City's special needs population. For the 2008 calendar year, the HOME Repair Program has assisted 22 low-income residents as of December 31, 2008 by providing needed residential repairs in addition to necessary handicap accessibility improvements.

Conservation – The Conservation Element of the Norwalk General Plan is intended to provide for the conservation, development and utilization of natural resources (e.g., water, minerals, energy sources etc.). Since the City of Norwalk is a completely urbanized community, there are limited natural resources that can be conserved and/or developed. However, conservation of existing resources from contamination and providing adequate mitigation measures to ensure that new development does not adversely impact the existing environment is being routinely achieved.

In the on-going effort to improve water quality and eliminate pollutant discharges into municipal storm drains and underground aquifers, the Engineering Division is currently responsible for city compliance with the Federally mandated National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES).

Through the Capital Improvement Program, the City has taken some measures to ensure the water quality and conservation. One measure that was taken in the 2008

calendar year was a project involving the construction of water interconnections to connect the City's water system with other water companies systems for emergency purposes.

Program activities to ensure the conservation of natural resources include interagency coordination with local and regional agencies, annual inspection and monitoring of the open channels and the implementation of Best Management Practices (BMP) for public construction projects.

Open Space – The City's Open Space Element is primarily dedicated to the preservation and enhancement of the City's remaining open space. These areas are generally located within public parks, schools, and developed greenbelts. Currently, the City is responsible for the maintenance and repair of 129 acres of park grounds, sixteen (16) baseball diamonds and the Aquatic Pavilion.

In the 2008 calendar year, the Recreation and Park Services Department, in coordination with the Community Development Department, completed some enhancements to several parks through the Capital Improvement Program. The following is a list of the improvements were made at the City's recreational facilities:

- Norwalk Park Aquatic Pavilion: showers were redone and new lockers were installed inside the men's and women's bathroom and locker rooms; and brick work at entryway was installed.
- Norwalk Arts & Sports Complex: bathrooms for meeting rooms were remodeled.
- Hermosillo Park: Hermosillo Master Plan was completed in 2008 and concepts for the development of a new community center, soccer fields, basketball and racquetball courts, landscaping, and irrigation improvements were reviewed by the City Council.
- Sara Mendez Park: The former Orr Park was renamed Sara Mendez Park and a new recreational facility and a walking path was constructed at the site.

Noise – The Noise Element of the General Plan is dedicated to protecting the community from excessive noise. The City recognizes that there are two major categories of noise sources, mobile and stationary. Because the City is located along several major transportation corridors (e.g., three freeways, three railroad lines, and several major arterial streets serving regional traffic), the City has constructed screen walls along Imperial Highway between Hoxie Avenue and west of Studebaker Road. Additional screen walls have been constructed along the western and southern property lines of the Norwalk Transportation Center to mitigate the impact of any excessive noise created by mobile noise sources (i.e., cars, trucks and motorcycles etc.).

With respect to stationary noise sources, they are generally associated with industrial and commercial activities, construction work, and human activity. Mitigation of these noise sources typically involve limiting business hours, restricting commercial and industrial business operations to enclosed buildings, and/or considering land use compatibility when determining an acceptable limit for noise exposure for various land

uses. A variety of these options continue to be implemented for all new developments in the City as a means of mitigating adverse noise impacts.

Safety – The Safety Element addresses both natural and man-made hazards that may result in the loss of life and/or damage of property. In an effort to minimize such loss/damage due to seismic activity, flood, fire, and man-made hazards, the City has created an Emergency Preparedness Section in the Safety Element to prepare and develop emergency plans, drills, training and communication/coordination with intergovernmental agencies.

The City also serves as a source of information to the community regarding Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) maps with respect to the City's flood zone and its potential for flood hazards. Additionally, the City's Community Development Department implements sound floodplain management requirements for developments within the City in order to mitigate potential flood hazards.

In 2004, the City of Norwalk adopted a National Hazard Mitigation Plan (NHMP). This disaster plan integrates community resources into municipal disaster management, including a list of local resources such as personnel, equipment, material, specialized medical and other training and auxiliary communications/L.A. County Disaster Communications Services. In conformance with the NHMP, the City of Norwalk has continued to perform quarterly mock disaster drills and conduct monthly training regarding emergency response that will help establish and maintain an on-going state of readiness within the City organization.

During the 2008 calendar year, the Public Safety Department has also continued to assist the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department to enhance community safety through crime prevention. Some of the existing law enforcement programs that have promoted public safety in Norwalk include: Norwalk Community Court, Multi-Agency Focus Team, Norwalk Enforcement Team (NET), Sheriff Problem Solving Team, Junior Park Ranger Program, Community Safety Partnership Team, Norwalk Apartment Partnership Association, Parking Enforcement on Private Property (PEPP), Graffiti Abatement Team, District Attorney/Court Liaison, Norwalk Park Patrol and Security, and AMC/Civic Center and Transportation Center Security.

In addition, the City continues to participate in a multi-agency crime task force that maintains collaborative partnerships between various law enforcement agencies, courts, parole officers, the District Attorney's office and local school districts.

Community Design – The Community Design Element was adopted as part of the General Plan update in 1996. Although the Community Design Element does not prescribe a set of particular design standards, it does offer guiding principles that promote quality design. Within this context, aesthetic considerations such as architectural style, scale, massing and building orientation are important design features associated with any new development, particularly, when a project design may impact the surrounding physical environment. Hence, the City takes into account all such design considerations during the development review process for all projects that

require discretionary approval. Therefore, through the Community Design Element of the General Plan, the City of Norwalk has continued to promote and obtain aesthetically attractive, quality developments throughout the City.

In 2008, the City continued to hold developers and builders to high architectural standards that enhanced the aesthetics of newly constructed & remodeled buildings. The city also continued to refine its plans for the installation of public art in front of the Social Services Building.

Educational and Cultural Resources – Educational and Cultural Resources is an element that was added in the 1996 General Plan update. The purpose of the element is to maintain and enhance the quality of education within the community and provide a sense of community identity through the preservation and expansion of the City's cultural facilities, programs, and services.

At present, Norwalk's educational resources include a Community College and four (4) public school districts that serve twenty-seven (27) schools ranging from elementary through high school level. The City's cultural resources include two (2) public libraries (e.g. the Norwalk Regional Library and the Alondra Library), and the Cultural Arts Center, which is located at the Arts and Sports Complex. In addition, there are eleven (11) parks throughout the City, which are sources of educational and cultural activities for Norwalk residents. There are also several historic resources within the community such as the Sproul Museum, the Paddison Ranch Buildings, the Darius David Johnston House, and the Front Street Buildings that celebrate the City's historic past during the beginning of the 20th Century. Norwalk has continued to promote and support its educational and cultural resources through continued community involvement and public awareness activities.

The City has continued to enhance and develop the City's educational and cultural resources. In 2008, the Senior Center Building received improvements to its ramps and sidewalk on the building's north side to enhance the accessibility of the building.

Utility Infrastructure – The City's new Utility Infrastructure Element, adopted during the 1996 General Plan update, is intended to ensure that adequate utility levels (e.g., water, sewer, storm drains, natural gas, electricity, etc.) are provided within the City to meet Norwalk's current and future needs.

During the past year, the City has continued to maintain all existing utility infrastructure and enhance its functional longevity to maximum performance. In 2008, the city undertook several projects that improved the community's infrastructure, which include:

- A measure that started the replacement of water meters in the residential area bounded by the neighborhoods south of city limits, Alondra Boulevard to the north, east of Pioneer Blvd to the west city limits.
- The city also initiated the replacement of water meter vault lids at several local schools, including Norwalk High School and several elementary schools.

- Initial plans to install the existing above ground utility lines underground have been submitted to Southern California Edison Company for the utility lines along Pioneer Boulevard between Rosecrans Avenue and 166th Street. This project is part of the City's efforts to eventually have all utility lines throughout the City underground.

CONCLUSION

The 2008 General Plan Annual Progress Report is the eighth annual report on the implementation status of the Norwalk General Plan. To date, staff believes the City has continued to faithfully implement the City's 1996 General Plan as the actions, plans, programs and projects documented in this report represent the City's commitment to achieve the goals and objectives set forth in the ten (10) elements of the Norwalk General Plan.